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COUNTRY: Laos

DOI : May 1965

SUBJECT: American Prisoners, Pathet Lao/North  
Vietnamese National Military Headquarters,  
Chinese, and Pathet Lao/Thai Liberation  
Army Activities in the Sam Nua Area

CO : Laos, Vientiane (28 February 1969)

SOURCE :

1. In early May 1965, six Americans were imprisoned in a compound at VH 192359 in the vicinity of the Pathet Lao/North Vietnamese Army (PL/NVA) National Military Headquarters at VH 192353 in Houa Phan Province, about 18 kilometers east of Sam Nua (VH 0157). The American prisoners were a colonel and five captains, who were downed by antiaircraft fire during a series of airstrikes against the PL/NVA headquarters in early May 1965. The compound was a temporary holding facility and foreign prisoners were later transported to Hanoi.

2. A portion of the prison compound was a cave, approximately two meters high at the entrance by three meters wide and five meters deep. A roofed enclosure about five meters long was attached to each side of the

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cave entrance. Wooden logs approximately four centimeters in diameter, and about three meters high were placed side by side to form the sides and front of the enclosure, which was roofed with woven bamboo strips. An interrogation building was approximately 50 meters west of the prison compound. A gate and guard post were at the front of the enclosure. The guard would open the gate to allow soldiers and villagers to view the prisoners. The prisoners had canvas cots and blankets in the enclosure where they slept. [redacted] saw the prisoners at night but the compound was illuminated by a kerosene lantern. The colonel was the only prisoner moving about. [redacted] estimated that he was about 6 feet 8 inches tall, blonde, and weighed approximately 250 pounds. He appeared to be in good physical condition.

3. In early May 1965 a Chinese mission, referred to as "the embassy," was in a cave at VR 192563. The mission had its own guards, cooks and typists. Tong Sing said that there were approximately 80 Chinese stationed at the Pathet Lao National Military Headquarters and that their primary mission was staff level logistical planning and support.

4. Pathet Lao units were screened and Pathet Lao soldiers of Thai origin were moved to the Pathet Lao National Military Headquarters. In mid-May 1965 there were approximately 30 Thai Pathet Lao members assembled there. These included Private Bounchan, about 32 years old, from Nong Khai, Thailand, and Private Bounlai, approximately 35 years old, from Udon, Thailand, both former members of the 3rd Pathet Lao Artillery Battalion. Bounchan and Bounlai [redacted] They said that all Thai Pathet Lao soldiers would be moved to Peking to join the Thai Liberation Army.

5. [redacted] Diases: State Army Air USMACV 7th Air Force  
CINCPAC PACAF ARPAC PACAF [redacted]